



# Maricopa County

## News Release

Department of  
Public Health  
1825/45 E. Roosevelt St.  
Phoenix, AZ 85006  
Phone: 602-506-6900  
Fax: 602-506-6885  
publichealth.maricopa.gov

For additional information: Doug Hauth, Public Information Officer  
(602) 506-4926, Pager (602) 205-3002

October 14, 2003

## First Human Cases of St Louis Encephalitis

(Phoenix) – Three Maricopa County residents have been identified as having the mosquito-borne disease, Saint Louis Encephalitis (SLE). Each of these three people sought medical attention after becoming ill with fever, headaches, and confusion. All have recovered.

St. Louis Encephalitis (SLE) was first seen in Arizona in 1964, and more than 30 cases have been reported since. SLE has spread throughout most of the United States.

SLE is transmitted to humans by the bite of an infected mosquito, but the occurrence and severity of it strongly depends on age. Incidence of disease in people older than 60 is five to 40 times greater than in those less than 10-years-old. More information on SLE illness can be found at: <http://www.cdc.gov/ncidod/dvbid/arbor/slefact.htm>.

There are several measures each individual can take to prevent SLE infection:

- Eliminate mosquito-breeding sites around the home by removing standing water in potted plants, tires and other containers.
- Repair window and door screens to keep mosquitoes out of the home.
- Avoid outdoor activity before dawn and after dusk when mosquitoes are most active.
- When outdoors, wear long sleeves and long pants to prevent mosquito bites.
- When outdoors, wear a mosquito repellent containing DEET.
- Report dead birds to local authorities.

More information on mosquito reduction and avoidance and reporting dead birds can be found at: <http://www.maricopa.gov/envsvc/water/vector/backyard.asp> or by calling (602) 506-6616.

The Maricopa County Departments of Public Health and Environmental Services will continue working to protect the community with an enhanced surveillance program including mosquito sampling and testing, testing of dead birds, evaluation of equine neurological illnesses and evaluation of human cases of meningitis and encephalitis.

## 30 ##